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SUPPORT

OTHER FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

ACTIVITIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SUDANO-SAHELIAN OFFICE

1990

Report of the Administrator

SUMMARY

The present report is submitted in accordance with Governing Council decision 90/41 of 20 June 1990, by which the Council requested the Administrator to continue to report annually on the activities of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO). The report reviews the activities of UNSO during the past year in support of desertification control and natural resources management activities in the 22 countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region of Africa covered by its mandate.

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INTRODUCTION

1. For the Sudano-Sahelian region, 1990 was a very dry year with rainfall significantly below average, at about 70 per cent of the 30-year norm. Agricultural output in most countries was lower and the stress on the production systems increased. As a result, the countries' capacity for achieving self-sufficiency in food production was further reduced. Meanwhile, the special attention finally accorded by the international community to environmental deterioration was reflected in various initiatives and actions launched during 1990. At the international level, the problem of land degradation, including deforestation and desertification, is one of several issues emphasized in the preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, which will provide an opportunity to review and trigger major initiatives for a global strategy. At the regional level, the Nairobi forum on environmental protection and development of a subregional strategy to combat desertification, held in October 1990, dealt with issues of high priority for the Sudano-Sahelian region.

2. The activities of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) in 1990 continued to address the major problems connected with the achievement of sustainable development at the human, as well as the institutional and the technological, level. They covered the establishment or strengthening of the institutional capacity of the Governments of the region to design, implement or monitor programmes in the area of sound management of natural resources as well as training, education and sensitization aimed at the broadest possible participation in development activities. Efforts continued to be made to identify and take into account human development priorities in the context of projects and programmes supported by UNSO. In this area the overall approach has been in tune with the major development themes as defined in Governing Council decision 90/34 of 23 June 1990.

3. The activities centred on the special features which make UNSO's role distinctive, i.e., its specialization in the protection and sound management of natural resources in arid and semi-arid lands in Africa; the implementation, on behalf of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification 1/ in the Sudano-Sahelian countries; and its close relationship to relevant subregional organizations, in particular the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development (IGADD). UNSO's working modalities and financial arrangements assured close donor-recipient collaboration in identification, formulation and monitoring of projects. The experiences gained have strengthened the Office's capacity to respond to the requests of the General Assembly and the Governing Council that more attention be given to making UNSO's experiences available to other African countries with dryland ecosystems similar to those of the Sudano-Sahelian countries (General Assembly resolution 44/172 and Governing Council decision 90/41).

I. OVERVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF UNSO IN 1990

4. In 1990, the main thrust of UNSO's programme was in the following areas: (a) assistance for planning and coordination in the area of natural resources management; (b) preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992; and implementation of programmes and projects.

A. Assistance for planning and coordination in the area of natural resources management

5. UNSO's assistance in this field particularly supported national efforts to prepare and implement strategic frameworks for natural resources management. It covered aspects such as institution-building, coordination at the national and international levels and resources mobilization. As a complementary activity, UNSO is also supporting the establishment of facilities for ecological monitoring. The overall financial support for these programmes amounted at the end of the year to over $3 million funded mainly from UNSO's General Resources. The UNSO programme of assistance is tailored to the expressed needs and capacities of the recipient countries taking into account similar interventions by other international organizations. Better harmonization of efforts has increased the relevance and impact of the strategic frameworks and also led to closer cooperation with other organizations such as the World Bank, the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and CILSS.

6. A project of assistance to implement the National Plan of Action to Combat Desertification for Chad has been prepared in cooperation with CILSS. UNSO is undertaking similar exercises jointly with CILSS in Senegal and Cape Verde. In six countries - Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, the Niger and the United Republic of Tanzania - UNSO launched and/or intensified support to strengthen national focal points charged with the preparation or implementation of strategic frameworks. In Cameroon, Guinea-Bissau, Mali and the Niger, UNSO, as part of its overall assistance, is facilitating government efforts to harmonize thematic strategies and activities related to natural resources management and the environment. In Ethiopia, UNSO contributed to IUCN assistance towards the preparation of a national conservation strategy. In Mali, UNSO assistance was, inter alia, instrumental in attracting substantial financial resources from other donors for the implementation of the National Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. In Uganda, UNSO has proposed a programme of assistance to strengthen the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the office of the Minister of State for Karamoja, which is responsible for developing the region of the country that is most seriously affected by desertification. Overall UNSO activities concerning strategic frameworks are well integrated, where applicable, into the round-table process in the form of sectoral and thematic follow-up, under the purview and coordination of the respective resident representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

7. During 1990 UNSO, together with the World Bank, supported the preparation of environmental action plans for Guinea and Benin, concentrating on land degradation and desertification issues. A similar joint approach has been initiated in the preparation of environmental action plans for the Gambia, Ghana and Togo.

8. As a consequence of the special attention being given to environmental issues, an increasing number of strategic frameworks are being introduced in the developing countries in the form of conservation strategies or environmental action plans. In an attempt to facilitate coordination, UNSO organized in 1990 a meeting on the harmonization of strategic planning frameworks. The meeting, attended by representatives of FAO, the World Bank, IUCN and UNEP, established preliminary arrangements for better harmonization and coordination of the various initiatives taken by these agencies and related to the management of natural resources.

B. Preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992

9. In response to General Assembly resolution 44/172 of 19 December 1989, UNSO initiated actions to support the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, with particular reference to the Conference issue entitled, "Protection and management of land resources by, inter alia, combating deforestation, desertification and drought" (General Assembly resolution 44/228, sect. I, para. 12 (d)).

10. At national and regional levels, UNSO, together with CILSS and IGADD, constituted in September 1990 a Joint Steering Committee in order to help identify and support key actions related to the Conference. The following actions were agreed on and implemented: (a) the launching of 22 national preparatory committees whose primary function is the preparation of national reports; (b) 22 small national projects with a budget of over $500,000 to support the activities of the preparatory committees, including reporting costs, national seminars and workshops, national consultants for preparation of reports and support to the secretariat of the preparatory committees; (c) the launching of a consultative process through regional meetings for exchange of views, identification of substantive issue areas and development of positions, recommendations and concerted regional approach (the first regional meeting was scheduled to take place from 13 to 15 February 1991 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso); (d) support for the preparation of regional and subregional reports related to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development; and (e) organizing information and sensitization activities in the Sudano-Sahelian region.

11. Finally, UNSO has been collaborating in the preparation of reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In particular, UNSO is participating in the Working Group on Land and Agriculture with specific inputs to the report on alternative sustainable livelihood systems and the reports on the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification.

C. Implementation of programmes and projects

12. The year 1990 was a year of transition due in part to the phasing out of UNSO's road programmes and the special emphasis now being given to assistance for planning and coordination, mainly in the form of advisory services or small projects. At the same time, new projects totalling $29 million were formulated and approved in line with UNSO's strategy of concentrating on specialized areas of intervention, in particular deforestation control and natural resources management. As the activities of these new projects were only started in 1990, they entailed little expenditure in that year. As in the past, most of the projects financed by UNSO will be implemented through the national execution modality with the Office for Project Services (OPS) as an associated agency.

13. Among the projects were those with a major deforestation control component, financed through earmarked contributions from Sweden and Norway totalling $11 million, in Burkina Faso, Senegal and the Sudan. These projects lay emphasis on the forestry/agriculture interface, on popular participation, as well as on training and sensitization. A programme to establish national tree-seed centres for collecting, screening, storing and distributing high quality seed to alleviate the current seed shortages in both Western and Eastern African countries has been formulated (in cooperation with CILSS as far as Western African countries are concerned). Within this programme earmarked financing has been secured for some national tree-seed centres, and others will be financed from the General Resources of UNSO beginning in 1991.

14. Most of the projects addressed the issue of natural resources management through soil protection, rangeland management or integrated land management. An example is the integrated land management project in Burkina Faso, to which the Government of Denmark contributed $6 million to restore agro-sylvo-pastoral systems and help the local population to manage common property resources on a sustainable basis. In Cape Verde, an additional contribution of $2 million from the Government of Norway will help to consolidate the results so far obtained through the programme of integrated development in the São João Baptista Valley, by restoring existing irrigation schemes and extending rehabilitation work to an additional 300 hectares of hill slopes. A second phase of a natural resources management project in the coastal plains of Djibouti was also launched during the year. On the basis of data gathered during phase I, this project aims to restore the vegetation cover in the plains, create agro-pastoral farms and introduce irrigated fodder crops and wind-breaks.

D. Other areas of activities

15. Resource mobilization. Efforts were carried out in 1990 to broaden further UNSO's donor base and to have donors contributing more substantively to UNSO's General Resources. This will enable the Office to undertake better long-term planning and to support projects which are of a prototype or innovative character, as well as to support activities which do not always

lend themselves to earmarked contributions, such as environmental education and awareness activities. In 1990 France joined the list of UNSO's donors, through contributions to the Office's General Resources as well as through earmarked contributions within the framework of the so-called Observatory of the Sahara and the Sahel (OSS).

16. Information and consciousness-raising. UNSO continued to give support to workshops, training and special events to raise public awareness on issues related to sustainable management of natural resources. The first issues of UNSO's technical publications describing project experiences were sent out in 1990. As a new activity UNSO began financing workshops on the use of Geographic Information Systems for planning and decision makers. In cooperation with CILSS, UNEP and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), a first workshop for the member countries of CILSS was held at Dakar in September 1990.

17. Observatory of the Sahara and the Sahel. A survey of programmes and projects intended to monitor the process of desertification was carried out by UNSO in the framework of OSS initiated by the French Government. The survey has uncovered substantial need for cooperative work within this area which can be pursued by UNSO in the framework of OSS or with regional organizations. A similar survey of research activities will be completed in 1991.

18. The UNSO-UNDP/UNEP joint venture. An independent evaluation of the UNSO-UNDP/UNEP joint venture support to UNSO from 1979 to 1989 was carried out during the year. The report acknowledged the achievements of UNSO and recommended that this support be continued and increased.

II. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

19. In the coming years UNSO will reinforce and consolidate its current orientation, which is to maintain and refine its project activities while at the same time giving more emphasis to its cooperation with Governments in the area of coordination, planning and monitoring the sustainable use of the natural productive resources. Related to this are the initiatives being launched by UNSO together with CILSS and IGADD, in coordination with the secretariat of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the rest of the UNDP system, to support preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992.

20. Another important activity will be the utilization of UNSO's experiences in the area of ecological monitoring to reinforce the countries' capacity to follow and to make decisions regarding the long-term development of the natural resources base. This effort which, to the extent possible, will be coordinated with CILSS and IGADD, will incorporate not only traditional geographical information but also other socio-economic factors of importance in the environment/development nexus.

21. The cooperation with other international organizations aiming at a better harmonization and coordination of strategic frameworks for protection of the environment and natural resources management will also be strengthened.

22. Finally, in line with Governing Council decision 90/41 of 20 June 1990, consultations have started with UNDP concerning UNSO's role as the focal point for the thematic handling of issues related to drought and desertification within the UNDP system. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/172, efforts will be made to assist arid and semi-arid sub-Saharan countries not covered by UNSO, in the specific area of planning and coordination of strategic frameworks for the management of natural resources and that of ecological monitoring.

III. ACTIVITIES OF OTHER ENTITIES IN UNDP

23. Within UNDP, assistance from the Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA), the Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe (RBASE), the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) to the countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region also includes activities with major components concerning the protection and management of natural resources. In 1990, UNDP supported such projects in Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, the Niger and Senegal. Many of these projects cut across a variety of areas, such as deforestation control, land degradation, range management, water resources development, soil conservation and sand-dune fixation. In Ethiopia, UNCDF launched a $3.4 million project to upgrade existing roads and to construct 100 kms of primary and feeder roads to provide access to the plantation sites of an UNSO-supported reafforestation project. At the regional level, UNDP is financing a major sand-dune stabilization and afforestation project for the Sudano-Sahelian countries of the Arab States. This project is promoting intercountry cooperation through a network of national institutions and by strengthening national capabilities for achieving sand-dune stabilization and combating wind erosion. To facilitate coordination and exchange of information within UNDP, UNSO organized consultative meetings in Nairobi and Lomé with resident representatives of the countries covered by its mandate, so as better to coordinate field activities with UNDP's field offices and regional bureaux (RBA and RBASE) and to ensure that its activities mesh with the preparation of UNDP's fifth programming cycle (1992-1996). UNSO has also participated in the preparation of programmes for the Global Environmental Facility, contributed comments on the UNDP draft Environmental Management Guidelines and taken part in meetings of the UNDP Environmental Action Team.

IV. FINANCIAL STATUS

24. In 1990, $25.6 million was mobilized through the UNSO Trust Fund. The sum of $17.2 million was earmarked for specific projects under trust fund arrangements and $8.4 million was allocated to UNSO's General Resources. For more details, see the annex to the present report.

Notes

1/ Report of the United Nations Conference on Desertification, Nairobi, 29 August-9 September 1977 (A/CONF.74/36), chap. I.

Annex

UNDG: BRANCH PLANNING TABLE AS AT 31 DECEMBER 1990

(Millions of United States dollars)

	All sources of funding (1 + 2 + 3)						General resources a/ (1)						Earmarked resources b/ (2)						Sub-trust fund (excludes Management Service Agreements) (3)					
	Actual 1985	Actual 1986	Actual 1987	Actual 1988	Actual 1989	Est. 1990	Actual 1985	Actual 1986	Actual 1987	Actual 1988	Actual 1989	Est. 1990	Actual 1985	Actual 1986	Actual 1987	Actual 1988	Actual 1989	Est. 1990	Actual 1985	Actual 1986	Actual 1987	Actual 1988	Actual 1989	Est. 1990
I. Availability of resources:																								
Balance as at 1 January (brought forward)	11.7	17.0	22.6	24.8	28.4	42.3	4.2	7.4	9.8 c/	16.0	22.7	29.2	4.	9.3	13.2 c/	7.9	5.2	10.0	3.0	0.3	-0.4	0.9	0.5	3.1
Total additional contribution received	19.0	20.2	20.7	21.2	28.6	34.1	5.7	5.8	6.9	7.6	6.7	8.6	11.7	9.3	9.0	13.5	17.9	14.8	1.6	5.5	4.9	3.1	4.1	1.7
Interest and other income	1.4	2.0	2.5	2.0	1.4	1.4	1.0	1.9	2.5	1.9	1.3	1.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	..	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Subtotal	20.4	22.2	23.2	23.2	30.0	35.7	6.7	7.7	9.3	9.5	10.0	11.9	11.7	9.3	9.0	13.5	17.9	14.8	2.0	5.6	4.9	3.2	4.2	1.8
Total	32.1	39.2	45.8	50.0	60.4	78.0	10.9	16.7	19.7	25.5	32.7	41.1	16.6	18.6	22.6	21.4	23.0	24.8	4.8	5.9	4.5	3.1	4.7	4.9
II. Utilization of resources																								
Project expenditure	12.4	13.9	17.3	18.3	15.1	9.9	1.8	3.1	0.2	0.7	1.5	1.5	4.6	5.1	13.8	15.2	12.3	7.3	4.0	5.7	3.3	2.4	1.5	1.1
Reimbursement of agency support cost	1.2	1.1	1.3	1.3	0.9	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.9	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.0
Programme support and administrative support costs	1.5	1.6	2.4	2.0	1.9	2.0	1.5	1.6	2.4	2.0	1.9	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	15.1	16.6	21.0	21.6	18.1	12.4	3.5	4.9	2.7	2.8	3.5	3.5	7.1	5.4	14.7	16.2	13.0	7.8	4.5	6.3	3.6	2.6	1.6	1.1
(I - II) III. Balance of resources at at 31 December	17.0	22.6	24.8	28.4	42.3	57.6	7.4	9.8	16.0	22.7	29.2	37.6	9.1	13.2	7.9	5.2	10.0	16.2	0.3	-0.4	0.9	0.5	3.1	3.8
Resources available and receivables for programme commitments																								
Balance of resources as at 31 December (as in III above)	17.0	22.6	24.8	28.4	42.3	57.6	7.4	9.8	16.0	22.7	29.2	37.6	9.3	13.2	7.9	5.2	10.0	16.2	0.3	-0.4	0.9	0.5	3.1	3.8
Add: Receivables as at 31 December	36.2	41.8	35.5	32.9	32.9	36.8	4.9	3.4	4.3	3.5	2.6	2.0	20.4	33.0	26.7	27.6	19.0	23.9	10.9	5.4	4.5	3.8	11.3	10.9
Subtotal	53.2	64.4	60.3	61.3	75.2	94.4	12.3	13.2	20.3	25.2	31.8	39.6	29.7	46.2	34.6	32.8	29.0	40.1	11.2	5.0	5.4	3.3	14.4	14.7
Less: Unspent project allocations as at 31 December	30.7	29.2	36.8	30.8	26.3	43.6	1.0	1.0	-1.9	0.9	1.9	2.6	18.9	22.9	35.2	28.4	22.4	30.0	10.8	5.3	3.5	1.5	2.0	11.0
Balance available as at 31 December	22.5	35.2	23.5	30.5	48.9	50.8	11.3	12.2	22.2	24.3	29.9	37.0	10.8	23.3	-0.6	4.4	6.6	10.1	0.4	-0.3	1.9	1.8	12.4	3.7

a/ Voluntary contributions.

b/ Cost-sharing.

c/ An amount of $0.4 million represents the 1984 opening balance adjustment between funds.